

Regulations regarding the Doctor Philosophiae (Dr. Philos.) degree at Nord University

Statutory authority: Adopted by the Board of Nord University on 8 May 2025 under the legal authority of the Regulations of 16 December 2005 No 1574 relating to Degrees and Vocational Training, Protected Titles and Nominal Length of Study at Universities and University Colleges Section 9 and the Act of 8 March 2024 No 9 relating to Universities and University Colleges Section 3-4.

Part I – Introductory provisions

Section 1. *The scope of the regulations*

These Regulations apply to the Doctor Philosophiae (Dr. Philos.) degree and provide rules on the right to take the Dr. Philos. examination and the organisation of the exam.

It follows from the Regulations relating to Degrees and Vocational Training, Protected Titles and Nominal Length of Study at Universities and University Colleges that Nord University can award the Dr. Philos. degree.

Section 2. *Objective and content*

The Dr. Philos. degree is an unsupervised doctoral degree that can be awarded to persons who have completed a second degree, i.e. a master's degree or equivalent, cf. Section 4-1.

The Dr. Philos. degree is at level 8 in the Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, which is the same level as the organised doctoral degrees, including Philosophiae Doctor (PhD).

The Dr. Philos. degree has been established to enable individuals who possess knowledge, skills and general competence at doctoral level to achieve a doctoral qualification.

A Dr. Philos. degree qualifies the holder for research activities and other types of work requiring a high level of scientific insight, work methodology and analytical thinking in accordance with good academic practice and research ethics standards.

The research work and doctoral thesis must be an independent work without formal supervision or affiliation with an organised doctoral programme.

The Dr. Philos. degree is awarded on the basis of:

- a. An approved academic thesis
- b. An approved trial lecture on an assigned topic
- c. An approved trial lecture on a self-selected topic
- d. An approved public defence of the thesis.

Section 3. *Responsibility for the degree of Dr. Philos.*

The University Board has overall responsibility for the Dr. Philos. degree and adopts regulations for the degree. The responsibility for assessing the right to take the examination, cf. Section 4-1, is delegated to the central research administration.

The faculties are responsible for assessment within their subject area. The faculty shall make a decision on:

- whether the topic of the submitted thesis belongs under a subject portfolio in which the faculty has active researchers with professorial expertise
- whether the thesis is of sufficiently high academic quality to be assessed, cf. Section 6
- the appointment of an assessment committee

- whether the thesis is worthy of a public defence for the degree of Dr. Philos.
- whether the trial lectures and public defence can be approved and a degree certificate issued.

Part II – Application and thesis

Section 4. *Application for assessment of the thesis and submission*

Section 4-1. *Conditions for presentation*

A five-year master's degree or equivalent second degree, cf. Sections 3 and 4 of the regulations concerning requirements for master's degrees, with satisfactory results, is required to take the examination. Applicants who, by other means, have demonstrated equivalent qualifications, on the basis of an application stating the grounds, and a separate assessment, be given the opportunity to take the doctoral examination. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide documentation of equivalent qualifications. The thesis shall not be assessed until the level of education has been assessed and any special permission has been granted.

The applicant must be a citizen of Norway or another Nordic country, or have a registered address in Norway. Other applicants may, on the basis of an application stating the grounds, and a separate assessment, be given the opportunity to take the examination if their thesis meets one or more of the following conditions:

- a. Covers topics or is based on material that is directly related to Norway.
- b. Has a strong connection to Norwegian research in the field in question.
- c. Has been carried out during a stay at a Norwegian university or research institution, or in close association with or in close collaboration with Norwegian researchers.

Candidates are not entitled to take the examination in a subject area in which they already hold a doctoral degree from a Nordic accredited institution.

Section 4-2. *Application for assessment of a thesis and documentation requirements*

Applications to take the examination for the degree of Dr. Philos. should be submitted to the central research administration at Nord University. The application must contain a brief explanation of how the thesis topic falls under one of the faculties' academic portfolio. The following documentation must be attached to the application:

- The thesis in digital format.
- Documentation that includes certificates and transcripts of grades for previous education, documentation of any qualifications equivalent to higher education.
- Documentation that necessary ethical and other permissions have been obtained where required.
- Declarations from co-authors where required in accordance with Section 5-1, sixth paragraph.
- A declaration stating whether the thesis is being submitted for assessment for the first or second time.
- A declaration that the thesis has not previously been submitted and/or assessed by another Norwegian or foreign institution.
- An overview of previous academic works (it must be possible to present the academic works on request).
- Information about handling of research data.

Applicants who are not citizens of Norway or another Nordic country must also attach documentation of a Norwegian residence permit and/or an account of how the thesis is related to Norway.

If the thesis is also submitted for assessment at another Norwegian or international institution, the case

processing at Nord University must be halted.

Section 5. *The thesis*

Section 5-1. *Thesis requirements*

The thesis must be an independent piece of research that meets international standards in terms of ethical and research ethics requirements, academic level and methodologies within the subject area.

The thesis shall contribute to the development of new knowledge and be of an academic standard to merit publication or public disclosure in a suitable format as part of the academic literature in the field.

The thesis must be at the same academic level as a PhD thesis. The absence of an approved training component requirement must be compensated for by the thesis work being more extensive than that required in organised doctoral programmes.

The thesis may consist of a monograph or a compilation of several smaller works. If the thesis consists of several smaller works, an account must be provided of how they are related in an introductory summary section (*kappe* in Norwegian).

An article-based thesis must normally consist of at least five (5) academic articles in recognised peer-reviewed journals. The applicant is expected to be the first author in the majority of the articles.

An introductory summary section must be written that provides a more detailed account of the thesis as a whole. The introductory summary section should be an independent effort and collate the issues and conclusions presented in the articles from an overall academic perspective. The candidate must be the sole author of this introductory summary section.

Joint work can be accepted for assessment if the candidate's contribution represents an independent effort that can be clearly identified. Academic chapters in anthologies can replace articles under this requirement if the publications are peer-reviewed and published by an approved publisher.

The part-works should not be older than eight (8) years at the time of submission. If older works are included, the application for submission must explain how this work nevertheless meets the requirement for developing new academic knowledge.

The application shall be written in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English. Regardless of which language the thesis is written in, it must include a summary in both Norwegian and English.

Section 5-2. *Work that is not accepted*

Works or parts of a work that have been approved as the basis for previously completed examinations or degrees may not be accepted for assessment. However, data, analyses or methodologies from previous degrees may be used as a basis for the work on the doctoral project.

A work or parts of a work that has previously been assessed and found not worthy of a public defence for a doctoral degree at another Norwegian or foreign educational institution, cannot, as a rule, be accepted for assessment even if the thesis is submitted in a revised form.

A thesis that has been written in whole or in part while the candidate was enrolled in an organised doctoral programme in Norway cannot be submitted for assessment for the Dr. Philos. degree.

Part III – Completion

Section 6. *Submission*

The thesis must be submitted electronically to the research administration at Nord University together with the application for assessment and documentation, cf. Section 4-2.

The responsible faculty can reject applications for assessment of theses on an independent basis if it is

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obvious that the thesis is not of sufficient academic quality and will not be approved by a committee, or if the thesis topic clearly falls outside the faculty's research areas.

The responsible faculty must ensure that the public defence of the thesis is held as soon as possible after submission: normally not longer than five (5) months after submission.

A submitted thesis cannot be withdrawn until a final decision has been made as to whether it is worthy of defence for the doctoral degree. After submission, the doctoral candidate is only entitled to make corrections of a formal nature, see Section 9-1.

A plagiarism check is carried out on the submitted thesis before the application is approved. Potential serious violations of recognised research ethics norms must be reported to the Commission for the Investigation of Research Misconduct, cf. Section 6 of the Act on Ethics and Integrity in Research.

Section 7. *Appointment of assessment committee*

When the responsible faculty has approved the application for assessment of the thesis, the faculty appoints an assessment committee consisting of at least three (3) members. The impartiality provisions in the Act relating to procedure in cases concerning the public administration (the Public Administration Act) Section 6 apply to the assessment committee members.

The assessment committee must normally be composed in such a way that:

- both genders are represented
- the majority are not affiliated with Nord University
- at least one of the members is from an institution outside Norway
- all members have a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification.

If these criteria are deviated from, the reasons for this must be specified.

The faculty appoints one of its employees as coordinator of the committee, either as a member of the committee or in addition to the committee members. Persons who have contributed to the thesis cannot be members of the assessment committee or involved in its coordination.

If necessary, the faculty may appoint an alternate member to sit on the assessment committee.

The candidate must be informed of the proposed composition of the committee and be given the opportunity to submit written comments within one week of receiving the proposal. The faculty decides whether these comments will be taken into account.

Provision must be made for the assessment of interdisciplinary Dr. Philos. theses.

Section 8. *The work of the assessment committee*

Section 8-1. *Collection of supplementary information*

The assessment committee can request access to the candidate's underlying source material and additional information to supplement or clarify the work.

Section 8-2. *Processing the assessment committee's recommendation and the candidate's comments*

The assessment committee submits a recommendation on whether the thesis is worthy of defence for the doctoral degree and explaining the grounds for its assessment. All parts of the submitted or presented documentation must be reviewed on the basis of the criteria in Section 5-1. The recommendation should be discursive and end with a clear conclusion regarding whether the work should be approved or not. Any dissenting opinions or individual statements by committee members must be included and explained in the recommendation.

The assessment committee's recommendation must be ready within three (3) months of the committee

receiving all the parts of the doctoral work for assessment. If the committee permits minor revisions to an academic thesis, cf. Section 8-3, a new deadline is set from the date on which the thesis is resubmitted. Permission to make minor revisions may only be granted once.

If the committee finds that extensive changes are needed to the theory, research question, hypothesis, material or methods in order for the work to be deemed worthy of public defence, the committee must reject the thesis, cf. Section 8-4.

The assessment committee's recommendation is submitted to the faculty, which then presents it to the candidate. The candidate will be given a deadline of ten (10) working days to submit written comments on the recommendation. If the candidate's comments may have a bearing on the question of whether the thesis can be approved, the comments should be presented to the assessment committee before the faculty makes a decision in the case. If the candidate does not wish to make any comments, the faculty should be informed of this in writing as soon as possible.

Non-unanimous recommendation

If the committee's recommendation is not unanimous and the faculty chooses to adopt the majority's opinion as the basis for its decision, the faculty shall make a decision in accordance with the majority's recommendation.

If the faculty finds that there are valid grounds to doubt the committee's recommendation or if the committee's recommendation is not unanimous and the faculty is considering adopting the minority's opinion as the basis for its assessment, the faculty may request further clarification from the assessment committee and/or appoint two new experts to make individual statements on the thesis. The experts must not be employed at the university, and not have been involved in the thesis.

If both of the new experts agree with the majority's original recommendation, then the recommendation shall be followed.

Supplementary statements or individual statements shall be submitted to the candidate, who will be given an opportunity to submit comments.

The faculty makes the final decision in the case on the basis of the assessment committee's recommendation and the statements obtained.

Section 8-3. *Minor revisions*

Based on the submitted thesis and any additional material, the assessment committee may recommend that the faculty permit the candidate to make minor revisions to the thesis before the committee submits its final recommendation. The committee must provide a written list of what the candidate specifically needs to revise. The committee must not recommend that the candidate should make minor revisions if this only concerns minor ambiguities in the thesis that can be clarified within the scope of the public defence.

If the faculty permits minor revisions to the thesis, a deadline not exceeding three (3) months shall be set. A new deadline must also be set for submitting the committee's final recommendation, which must not exceed two (2) months after the committee has received a revised version of the thesis.

The candidate cannot appeal the faculty's decision pursuant to this provision.

If the candidate does not submit a revised thesis by the deadline set by the faculty, the committee shall recommend that the faculty reject the thesis.

Section 8-4. *Rejection of a submitted thesis and resubmission*

If the committee finds that extensive changes are needed to the theory, research question, hypothesis, material or methods in order for the work to be deemed worthy of public defence, the committee must recommend that the faculty reject the thesis.

An academic thesis that has been found not worthy of defence can be resubmitted for assessment in a

revised form no earlier than six (6) months after the faculty has made its decision.

In the instance described in the first paragraph, the faculty appoints a new assessment committee, preferably including at least one member of the original committee.

A candidate who submits a new application for assessment must state that the work has previously been assessed and found not worthy of defence.

A thesis can only be re-evaluated once.

Section 9. *Publication of the thesis*

Section 9-1. *Correction of formal errors in the thesis before its publication*

After submission, the candidate may apply once to the faculty for permission to correct formal errors in the version of the thesis to be published. A complete list (errata) must be attached to the application showing the corrections that the candidate wishes to make.

The deadline for applications to correct formal errors is one week after the candidate has received the recommendation. The list of errata is added as an insert to the thesis, which is available during the public defence. The assessment committee must be informed about the approval and content of the errata before the public defence.

Section 9-2. *Requirements regarding the printed thesis*

When a thesis is found worthy of public defence, the candidate submits the thesis in a standard format in accordance with Nord University's regulations. The faculty organises the printing of the thesis.

The candidate must prepare a brief abstract of the thesis in English and Norwegian, the purpose of which is to inform the international research community of the thesis and its results. If the thesis is written in a language other than English or Norwegian, an abstract must also be provided in the language of the thesis. The abstract must accompany the thesis and will, like the thesis itself, be made publicly available.

Section 9-3. *Publication*

The thesis shall be publicly available no later than ten (10) days prior to the date of the public defence. The thesis must be made publicly available in the form in which it was submitted for assessment, with any corrections pursuant to Section 9-1.

No restrictions may be imposed on the publication of a doctoral thesis, with the exception of cases where postponement of publication has been agreed in advance.

An external party cannot demand that all or part of a doctoral thesis be exempt from public disclosure.

Nord University reserves a non-exclusive right to archive the thesis and make it accessible via Nord Open Research Archive. This right means that the thesis is archived and made accessible in its entirety, as one document, including any part-works, as far as rights allow. Nord University shall not grant access to any part-works individually, separate from the other parts of the thesis.

Any pre-arranged postponement (embargo) of publication must be limited to a maximum period of two (2) years after the public defence.

The candidate must comply with the applicable guidelines for crediting institutions when publishing or making their thesis universally accessible.

Section 10. *The doctoral examination*

Section 10-1. *The trial lectures*

The candidate must hold two public trial lectures after the thesis has been found worthy of public

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defence, but before the defence is held. One lecture must be on a self-selected topic related to the candidate's research and one on an assigned topic. The trial lectures are an independent part of the doctoral examination.

The topic of the lectures must not be directly related to the topic of the doctoral work and shall challenge the candidate to discuss aspects that go beyond the thesis. The objective is to test the candidate's ability to acquire knowledge outside the topic of their thesis and their ability to convey this knowledge in a lecture situation.

The candidate shall notify the faculty of the title of the trial lecture on the self-selected topic one month before the date of the public defence. The faculty approves the proposed self-selected topic for the trial lecture.

The topic of the trial lecture on an assigned topic shall be decided by the assessment committee, and the candidate must be informed ten (10) working days before the lecture is due to take place.

The trial lectures shall be held in the language in which the thesis was written unless the faculty approves the use of another language. The trial lectures shall be held at Nord University.

The assessment committee assesses the trial lectures, and if they are satisfactory, the doctoral candidate may conduct a public defence of the doctoral thesis (disputation), cf. Section 10-2.

If the committee does not approve the trial lecture, it must explain the grounds for its decision.

If the assessment committee does not approve the trial lectures, new trial lectures must be held. New trial lectures must be held on new topics as soon as possible, and no later than six (6) months after the first attempt. New trial lectures may only be held once for each category of trial lecture and shall, as far as possible, be assessed by the original committee.

Section 10-2. Public defence of the thesis (disputation)

The public defence of the thesis must take place after the trial lectures have been held and approved and normally within two (2) months of the faculty finding the thesis worthy of defence.

The time and location of the defence must be announced at least ten (10) working days before it is due to take place. The defence must be held at Nord University.

The committee that originally assessed the thesis shall also assesses the public defence.

The public defence takes place in the language of the thesis unless the faculty, based on an application containing grounds and in consultation with the assessment committee, approves another language.

As a general rule, there must be two opponents. The two opponents must be members of the assessment committee and are appointed by the faculty.

The defence is chaired by the dean or a person authorised by the dean. The chair of the defence gives a brief presentation of the submission and assessment of the thesis and of the trial lectures and an assessment of them. The objectives and results of the academic work are then presented, either by the doctoral candidate or an opponent.

The first opponent normally starts questioning the candidate and the second opponent concludes the questioning. After both opponents have concluded their questioning, members of the audience will have an opportunity to comment *ex auditorio*. One of the opponents sums up the opposition, and the chair concludes the public defence.

The assessment committee submits a recommendation to the faculty, in which it details the committee's assessment of the defence of the thesis. The recommendation culminates in a conclusion stating whether the defence should be approved or not. If the defence is not approved, the assessment committee must explain the grounds for its recommendation, cf. Section 10-3.

Section 10-3. *Approval of the doctoral examination*

The faculty makes the final decision on the approval of the doctoral examination on the basis of the assessment committee's recommendation.

If the faculty decides not to approve the defence, in accordance with the assessment committee's recommendation, the candidate may defend the thesis once more. A new defence should be held as soon as possible and within six (6) months at the latest. The doctoral candidate should, as far as possible, be assessed by the original assessment committee.

Section 10-4. *Termination of assessment on the basis of academic misconduct in the doctoral thesis, trial lectures or public defence*

Decisions on termination of assessment on the basis of academic misconduct are made by the rector in line with statements from the Research Ethics Committee, cf. the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges Section 13-2 (1).

Section 11. *Conferral of the degree and diploma*

Section 11-1. *Conferral of the degree*

Based on the faculty's approval of all parts of the doctoral examination, the degree of Doctor Philosophiae (Dr. Philos.) will be conferred on the candidate by the rector of Nord University.

Section 11-2. *Degree certificate and diploma*

Nord University issues a degree certificate for a Dr. Philos. degree. The certificate must comply with the university's guidelines for certificate design as far as appropriate.

In addition to the certificate from Nord University, a ceremonial doctoral diploma is issued during the annual doctoral ceremony. The diploma is signed by the rector and the faculty dean.

Part IV – Appeals, entry into force and transitional provisions

Section 12. *Appeals*

Section 12-1. *Appeals against rejections of an application for assessment, a thesis, trial lecture or public defence*

Rejection of an application for assessment can be appealed in accordance with the provisions of the Public Administration Act Section 28 ff. The appeal, including the grounds for the appeal, must be submitted to the research administration.

Rejection of a thesis, trial lecture or public defence can be appealed pursuant to the provisions of the Public Administration Act Section 28 ff. The appeal, including the grounds for the appeal, must be submitted to the faculty.

After the case has been presented to the assessment committee, the faculty may set aside or amend the decision if it finds the appeal substantiated, cf. Section 10-2. If the faculty dismisses the appeal, the appeal is submitted to the Committee for Student Affairs at Nord University. The committee can try all aspects of the appealed decision.

If the faculty or committee finds reason to do so, a committee or individuals may be appointed to assess the evaluation made and the criteria on which it was based, or to carry out a new or supplementary expert assessment.

Section 12-2. *Appeals against termination on the basis of assessment misconduct*

Decisions on termination of an assessment on the basis of academic misconduct may be appealed pursuant to the provisions of the Public Administration Act Section 28 ff. The appeal, including the grounds, must be submitted to the faculty. If the rejection is upheld, the appeal must be submitted without undue delay for decision by the Ministry or a special appeal body appointed by it.

Section 13. *Entry into force*

Regulations for the Doctor Philosophiae (Dr. Philos.) degree at Nord University enter into force immediately. At the same time, the Regulations of 26 October 2023 No 1749 for the Doctor Philosophiae (Dr. Philos.) degree at Nord University are repealed.